

Weeds: Common dandelion: *Taraxacum officinale*



Photo by: J.A. Kropf

Use IPM (Integrated Pest Management) for most successful weed management.

Family: Asteraceae (Compositae)

Cycle: Perennial

Plant Type: Broadleaf

Biology

Description: The common dandelion is a persistent taprooted plant reproducing by seeds and by short shoots from the crown. It also grows back from roots broken during hand removal. Plants consist of a rosette of deeply lobed or toothed basal leaves and upright, leafless flower stalks. The leaves are variable in size, ranging from two to twelve inches long. The teeth or lobes are typically opposite each other and point back toward the base of the leaf. The unbranched flower stalks are hollow and the juice of the entire plant is milky. Flower heads are broad and yellow, maturing into a distinctive white "puffball" of windblown seeds. The root is deep and rather fleshy, often reaching several feet into the soil. Plant size is variable. Common dandelion can reach up to two feet if uncut, or can remain low-growing in mowed lawns. Special information: Dandelion is edible and can serve as good forage for livestock.

Habitat: Common dandelion is found in waste places, moist areas, and meadows and pastures, as well as being a lawn weed.

Management Options

- Cultivation (rototilling or hoeing) will effectively eliminate plants.
- Chemical management options are outlined in the PNW Weed Management Handbook available through WSU at 1-800-723-1763. There is also information for home gardeners at <http://pep.wsu.edu/hortsense>.